[In regard to the proposal that Road Boards should be formed for each *pakuthi* and taluk, the creation of Village Panchayats would serve the purpose contemplated in regard to villages. The Central Board and the District Boards have not been functioning for long and any reforms can be made only after watching their work for some time. The bends and curves in many places have recently been improved to prevent motor accidents. It is not practicable to prepare a comprehensive estimate for the improvements required on all the roads and carry out the works simultaneously. Even now there is a rule making the officers of the P. W. Department responsible for loss or damage consequent on careless work. The public come to know more of the very few cases in which loss or damage occurs. It is not possible to have a special rule for the P. W. Officers and to discriminate against them. They are liable just like officers of other departments and non-officials who are charged with such public works. The other points will be considered.]

54. Tolls.

MR. ERAVI MADHAVAN UNNITHAN (*Kunnattur taluk*) said that, even though a resolution recommending the abolition of tolls in the State was passed in the Legislative Council, the Government were continuing to collect the inconvenient and unpopular tax. It was a matter which affected nearly every man, woman and child in the country.

Speaking particularly about the toll-gate at Adoor in the Kunnathur taluk, the member said that the inconveniences which the owners and drivers of conveyances, the passengers, and the people living close to the toll-gate were subjected to during all hours of the day and sometimes at night were many and more unbearable than those experienced in the more favoured taluks of Kottarakara, Chenganur and Mavelikara. Much trouble was experienced even by children going to schools in conveyances.

The member enumerated several instances of delays and hardships caused by the toll-gate to passengers, Government officers and others. The inclusion of bicycles in the Vehicles Regulation and the levy of tolls on them amounted to an awful nuisance. The closing of roads by bamboo poles as a signal to motorists to stop and pay toll was another nuisance. The Government had spent very little of their revenues on public works in the Kunnattur taluk. Even the building in which the Adoor English High School was located was constructed by the inhabitants of the taluk. If the abolition of tolls throughout the State could not be immediately decided on, the toll-gate at Adoor should be abolished without loss of time.

If Government were of opinion that they could not afford to sacrifice the revenue from conveyances, the practice of registering conveyances might be followed.

DEWAN'S REPLY: You have very vividly described some of the hardships people have to undergo in crossing toll-gates. There might be some truth in what you said, but some of the descriptions were perhaps a bit exaggerated.

MEMBER : These are all facts.

DEWAN : One understands that there is some hardship; and Government—as I told another member some time ago—have under consideration the question whether tolls may be abolished and replaced by a tax on vehicles.

55. Public works in the Ambalapuzha taluk.

MR. KRISHNA PANIKKAR SANKARA PANIKKAR (*Ambalapuzha taluk, Group I*) speaking in Malayalam, said that the policy followed by Government in regard to public works was not satisfactory. Funds were not provided in the budget of the Public Works Department with an eye to the most urgent needs of the country. Necessary steps should be taken for the prompt execution of public works in the Ambalapuzha taluk. Kuttanad was seldom visited by Government officers for want of proper means of communication there.

For over 35 years, the need for the opening of the Thiruvalla-Ambalapuzha road had been urged before the authorities. Some lands lying between Thakazhi and Edathua were acquired for the construction of a portion of that road, but the lands were subsequently sold in auction. There was already a road between Ambalpuzha and Thakazhi and a road was sanctioned to be opened from Thiruvalla to Edathua. If the two roads could be joined, the people inhabiting a very large area would be immensely benefited.

The Alleppey-Changanacherry canal should be completed immediately. A road should also be opened between the two places alongside the canal. The canal and the road would join the most important port with the most important market in the State.

The following canals should be deepened and improved for agricultural purposes :—

(i) the Vatayil *todu* lying to the South of the Anaprambal temple at Thalavady ;

(ii) the canal running between Aree *todu* in Edathua and the Veeyapuram river, along the eastern bank of the *chira* belonging to Mr. E. J. John ;

(iii) the canal running between the northern and southern sides of the Thakazhi temple and Ambalapuzha ; and

(iv) the canal running northwards from below Pallipalam in Edathua.

The inhabitants of Kuttanad had never seen the improved methods of agriculture which were advertised by the Department of Agriculture. The officers of that department were not in evidence in places such as Ambalapuzha and Kuttanad, which were the most important centres of agriculture in the State. The headquarters of the department were located far away from Kuttanad and the circuiting officers went only as far as Alleppey. Manure was seldom issued to the ryots of Kuttanad and the hardships endured by them by the periodical outbreak of paddy-pests, inadequate supply of water, etc. were well-known. Speedy measures should be adopted for affording them relief.